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CSD *News Release*

MIAMI-DADE CONSUMER ADVOCATE CHAIRS DCBA COUNTY COURT COMMITTEE

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Miami-Dade County's Consumer Advocate, Leonard Elias, is the new chairman of the Dade County Bar Association's County Court Committee.

Elias will lead a committee of 16 attorneys who will make recommendations to the Bar Association on ways to improve the administration and integrity of the county court process. "In addition to receiving input from attorneys, we will expand the process to obtain feedback from the people who use the small claims courts," he says.

Elias is also scheduling a series of educational seminars aimed at attorneys, law students and members of the public.

The first of the seminars, scheduled for September 21, will deal with Florida's landlord and tenants laws from the perspective of the landlord. Later in the series tenants rights will be addressed.

Another seminar will deal with 'Views from the bench,' giving participants an opportunity to hear about the County Court process from the perspective of a judge. This event will be hosted jointly with the Bar Association's 'Put Something Back Project,' a mechanism through which attorneys give free legal advice and representation to needy persons.

Other subjects to be covered by these seminars include:

- a) Prosecuting and defending cases in county and small claims courts;
- b) Collecting on a judgment;
- c) Lien laws;
- d) Defending non-criminal traffic infractions;
- e) Contract cancellation rights;
- f) Local business regulatory laws (covering motor vehicle repair shops, moving companies, locksmiths, motor vehicle title loans, towing and vehicle immobilization).

A practicing attorney since 1975, Leonard Elias has been the Consumer Advocate in Miami-Dade County's Consumer Services Department (CSD) since 1987. Prior to joining the CSD he was the Assistant Attorney General and Consumer Counsel in the Florida Attorney General's Department.

Elias currently conducts monthly free clinics across Miami-Dade County to train people in how to use the Small Claims Court system. The next clinic is on Thursday evening, September 6 at the West Kendall Regional Library, 10201 Hammocks Boulevard, beginning at 6:30. [END]

The Miami Dade Consumer Services Department is an agency of Miami-Dade County government that protects consumers through complaint mediation, business regulation, and consumer education. The Department operates the Consumer Hotline (305) 375-3677, a central telephone number for consumer complaints and information.